

ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION



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November 23, 2005

Mr. Mike Barton, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Transportation &
Public Facilities
Office of the Commissioner
3132 Channel Dr.
Juneau, AK 99801-7898

Re: Parks Highway Broad Pass Road/Rail Grade Separation Project
Seward Highway at Lawing Grade Separation

Dear Commissioner Barton: *San*

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOTPF) has made excellent progress in the last decade in enhancing the safety of the state's National Highway System (NHS) by grade-separating several road/rail crossings. Projects on the Seward, Glenn and Parks highways have substantially improved the safety and efficiency of the system. The state's goal of eliminating all at-grade crossings on the NHS is moving forward slowly, but the end is in sight.

We are particularly pleased with the award of the Rex Overpass project contract this past week. You may recall Johnny Reves, an Alaska Railroad employee, died from injuries sustained in a crossing accident there in 1994. Several other ARRC employees have been severely injured at Rex as well. The Summit Overpass is another project the department awarded this past summer with construction slated for next year.

Five at-grade crossings remain on the Parks Highway: Montana, Sunshine, Hurricane, Broad Pass, and Denali Park. Broad Pass is in the design stage and will be ready to advertise in late FFY06 or early FFY07. However, the draft 2006 – 2008 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) has not programmed any further funds for the remaining 4 Parks Highway crossings within its cycle.

The final at-grade crossing to be eliminated on the Seward Highway is at Lawing, near Crown Point. We believe significant public safety will be served by this project and strongly encourage the department to retain it in place on the schedule.

Mike

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Once a project is locked in I would also ask your support to ensure that they are actually ready to go to construction immediately when they become available to advertise.

Your support of these grade separations will continue to help us improve safety of our rail, trucking, and the traveling public as well as increase the efficiency of the state's intermodal transportation system. We also recognize that construction of a gas pipeline will place significant and damaging wear and tear on all our remaining at-grade crossings. So eliminating at-grade crossings on the NHS prior to the construction of the gas pipeline would add welcomed robustness and safety during the pipeline construction years.

Sincerely,



Patrick K. Gamble
President & Chief Executive Officer

cc: Bruce Carr, ARRC, Dir. Strategic Planning
Tom Brooks, ARRC, Assistant Vice President Projects and Chief Engineer